

SPOTLIGHT

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THUNDERCRACKER

SPOTLIGHT

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FORMERS



THUNDERCRACKER

Barber Chee

THE TRANSFORMERS™

STORY SO FAR:

In the early days of the conflict between Autobots and Decepticons, both sides tried to gain any advantage they could... and Thundercracker was part of a team seeking an ancient secret...

(Editor's note: This story takes place after the events of Transformers: Autocracy)

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SPACE. LONG AGO.

ATMOSPHERE
IS AT, AH... ABOUT
POINT-SIX
CYBERTRONIAN
DENSITY...

...UNUSUALLY
HEAVY FOR AN
ASTEROID
THIS SIZE.

THAT'S
FASCINATING.
REALLY. THIS IS
EXACTLY WHY I
JOINED THE
DECEPTICONS...

...NO, WAIT,
I SIGNED ON
TO KILL
AUTOBOTS—

—NOT
CLIMB
AROUND
ROCKS IN
SPACE.

I KNOW,
BLITZWING.
THIS ISN'T
MY THING,
EITHER...

...BUT
I'M GETTING
SOME WEIRD
READINGS ON
THE SCANNER.

TOO MUCH
AIR. TOO
MANY ALPHA
PARTICLES...

TOO
MUCH
SCIENCE.

WAAK

AT LEAST
ACT LIKE YOU'RE
A SEEKER,
THUNDERCRACKER.

THERE'S
NOTHING
TO FIND.

IF
METROPLEX
WAS EVER
HERE, HE'S
LONG GONE.

IT WAS THE
TWO-HUNDRED-AND-
THIRTY-EIGHTH DAY...

...AND WE HAD **NOTHING**
TO SHOW FOR OUR **HUNT**.

NOTHING BUT A **BROKEN**
DATAPAD, A WEIRD CHUNK OF
METAL, A LACK OF **RESPECT**
FROM MY **COLLEAGUES**...

...AND A **DESTROYED**
OUTPOST OF SOME
MISERABLE CIVILIZATION
WE NEVER BOTHERED TO
LEARN THE **NAME** OF.

WE **ANNIHILATED** IT ON THE
WAY IN BECAUSE IT STOOD
BETWEEN **US** AND **OUR GOAL**.

JUST A COSMIC WASTE OF
RESOURCES, DOOMED BY
UNFORTUNATE GEOGRAPHY.

IT DOESN'T **MATTER**—
THE **MISSION** MATTERS.

ONLY THE **HUNT**
MATTERS.

THE HUNTING PARTY


WE HUNT
A **TITAN**...

...WE HUNT THE **FIRST** AND
GREATEST OF THEM ALL.



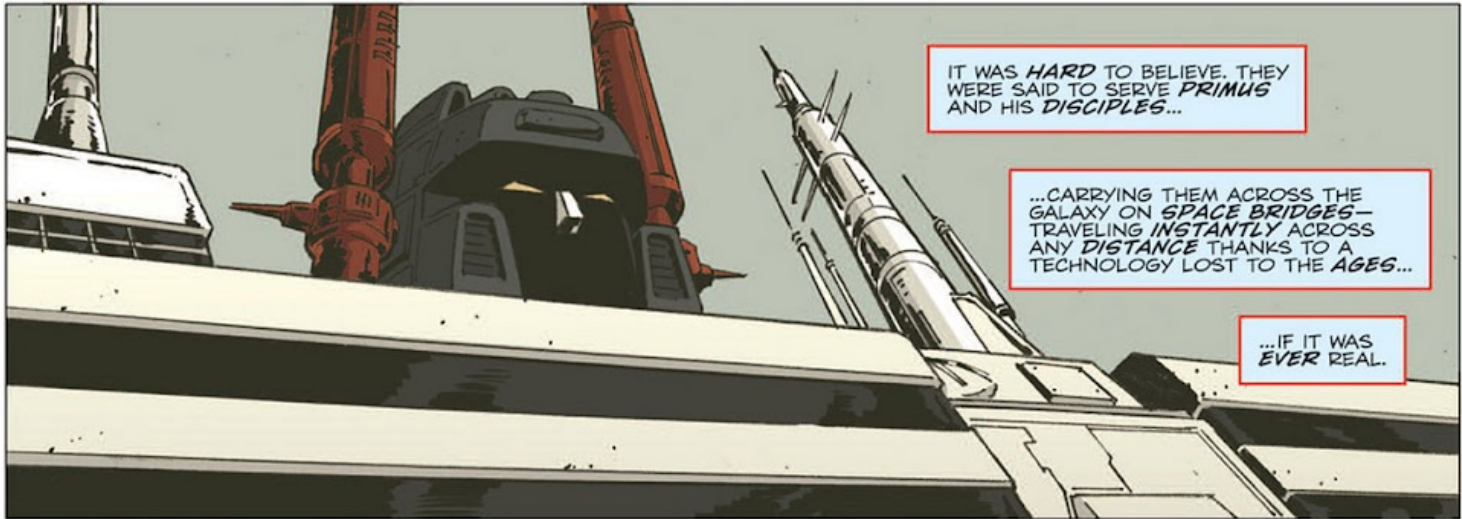
THEY WERE AN ANCIENT SPECIES OF CYBERTRONIAN—NO MORE THAN A LEGEND, REALLY...

...BUT I WAS *THERE*, YEARS AGO, AT THE DAWN OF THE WAR BETWEEN AUTOBOTS AND DECEPTICONS...



...WHEN WE TRIED TO CAPTURE THE AUTOBOT SOLDIER ORION PAX AND THE PHILOSOPHER ALPHA TRION.

MY LEADER, MEGATRON, HAD LONG HELD THAT THE TITANS WERE *REAL*—AND TRION OFFERED CONFIRMATION.



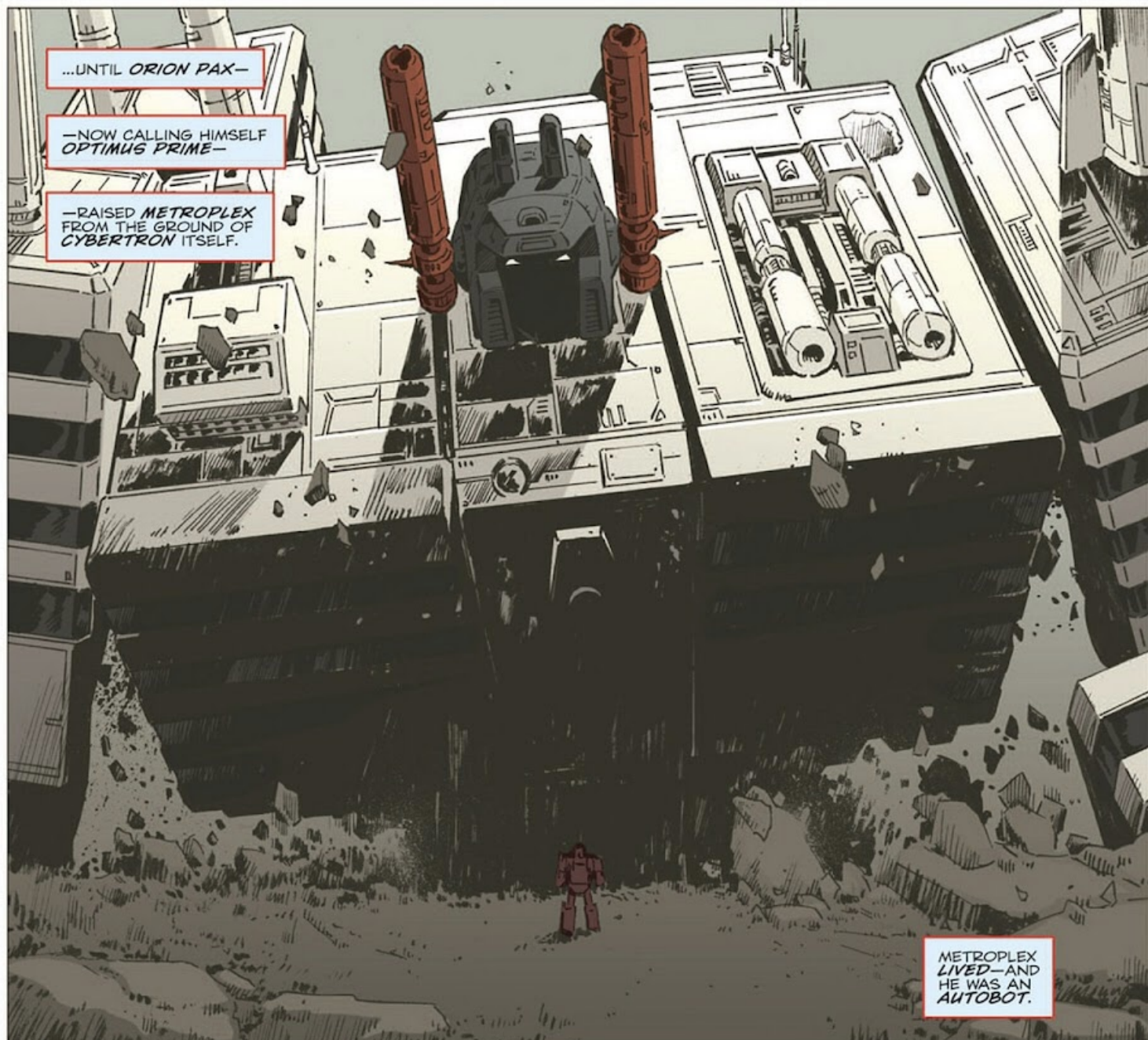
IT WAS HARD TO BELIEVE. THEY WERE SAID TO SERVE PRIMUS AND HIS DISCIPLES...

...CARRYING THEM ACROSS THE GALAXY ON *SPACE BRIDGES*—TRAVELING INSTANTLY ACROSS ANY DISTANCE THANKS TO A TECHNOLOGY LOST TO THE AGES...

...IF IT WAS EVER REAL.



THE TITANS ALL VANISHED, *EONS* AGO. WE ASSUMED THEY'D GONE TO THE STARS...

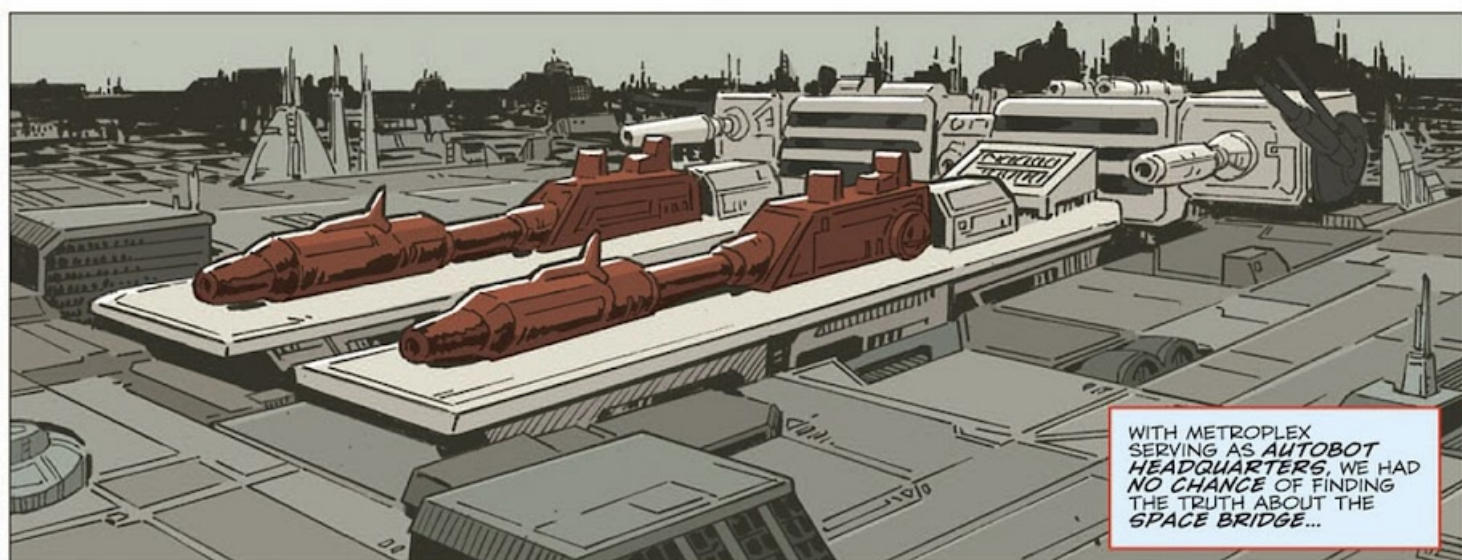


...UNTIL ORION PAX—

—NOW CALLING HIMSELF
OPTIMUS PRIME—

—RAISED *METROPLEX*
FROM THE GROUND OF
CYBERTRON ITSELF.

METROPLEX
LIVED—AND
HE WAS AN
AUTOBOT.



WITH *METROPLEX*
SERVING AS *AUTOBOT*
HEADQUARTERS, WE HAD
NO CHANCE OF FINDING
THE TRUTH ABOUT THE
SPACE BRIDGE...



...AND THEN HE
VANISHED...



...AND I WOUND UP **HERE**—

—SEARCHING THE **GALAXY**, BECAUSE I **HAPPENED** TO BE THERE WHEN **ALPHA TRION** HAPPENED TO SAY SOMETHING.



NOT TO SOUND **BITTER**, BUT WHEN NOBODY BUT ME SAW THAT PIECE OF **METAL** ON THE GROUND NEXT TO MY DATAPAD...

...WELL, I MADE **SURE** NOBODY SAW ME **PICK** IT UP. IT WAS **CYBERTRONIAN**—I COULD TELL **THAT**.

THE **REST** WAS JUST A **HUNCH** AND A **HOPE**. WHAT IF THIS WAS SOMETHING **METROPLEX** LEFT BEHIND...



...AND WHAT IF IT GAVE US SOME KIND OF A **TRAIL** TO FOLLOW...?

COMPUTER—RUN A FULL-SPECTRUM **RESONANCE SCAN**.

DETECTED.

UM. ANYTHING **UNUSUAL**?



OBJECT IS EXTREMELY OLD.

NO **HELP**.

QUANTUM-TUNNELING RADIATION IS EMANATING AT A **RARE WAVELENGTH**.

THERE—**THAT**. SEARCH THIS **SECTOR** FOR **SIMILAR RADIATION**.



DETECTED.

A **SMALL PLANETOID**, LIKE THE ONE WE'RE ORBITING:

LITTLE TO NO LIFE AND AN **UNUSUALLY DENSE** ATMOSPHERE, GIVEN ITS **GRAVITATIONAL SIGNATURE**.



ONLY A FEW **QUANTUM JUMPS** AWAY...

THUNDERCRACKER, WHERE **ARE** YOU?

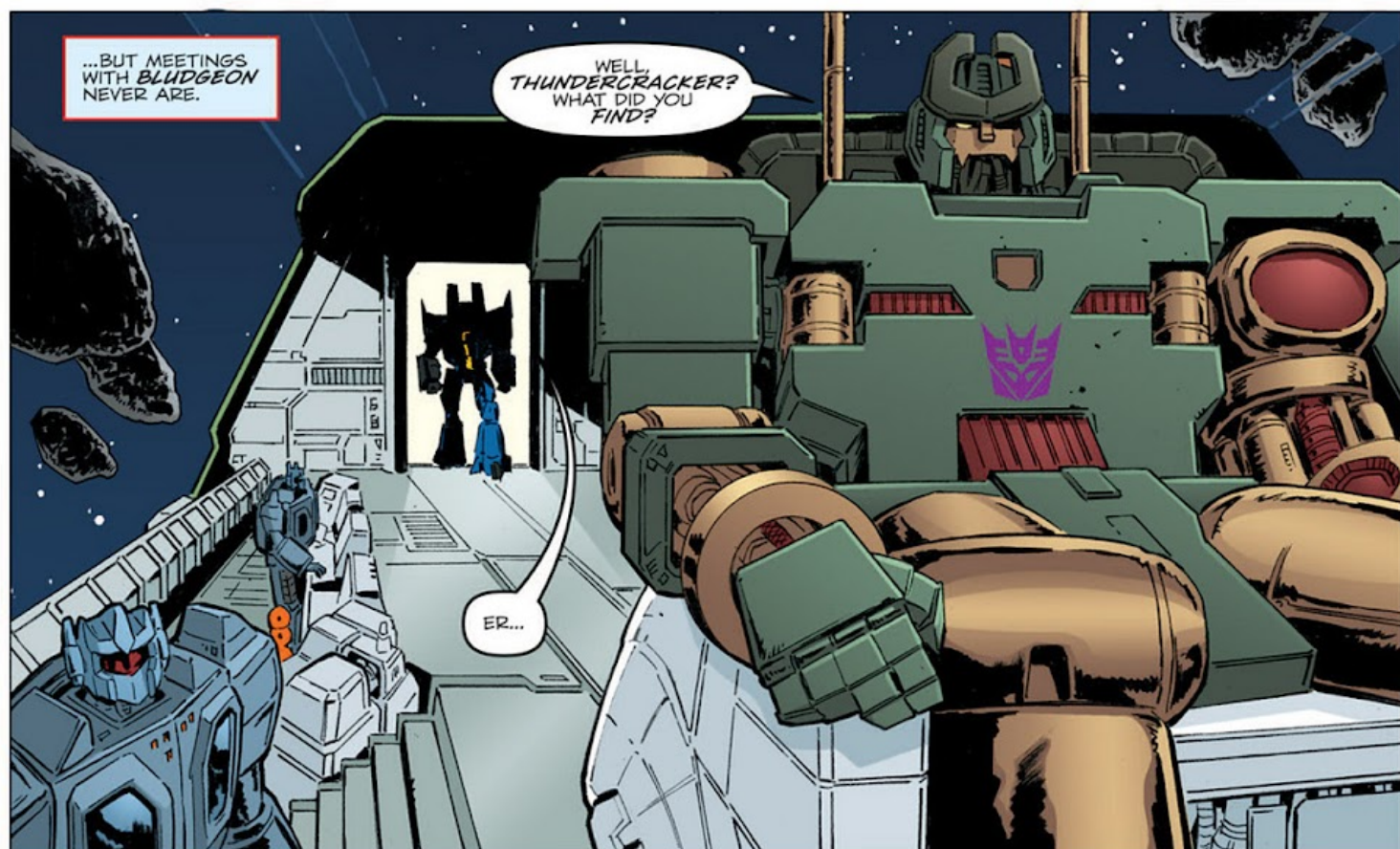


AH—JUST **CONFIRMING** SOME **DATA**, SIR.

REPORT TO THE **BRIDGE** IMMEDIATELY. I DO NOT ENJOY **WAITING**.

ON MY **WAY**.

THIS WON'T BE **PLEASANT**...



...BUT MEETINGS
WITH **BLUDGEON**
NEVER ARE.

WELL,
THUNDERCRACKER?
WHAT DID YOU
FIND?

ER...



...WELL,
SIR. EVIDENCE
SUGGESTS
METROPLEX HAD
BEEN THERE, AN
INDETERMINATE
TIME AGO.



ANYTHING
THAT MIGHT
LEAD US
TO HIM?



N-NO, SIR.
NOTHING.

BUT I DO
HAVE A **HUNCH**—
A STAR SYSTEM
WITH **SIMILAR**
CHARACTERISTICS.

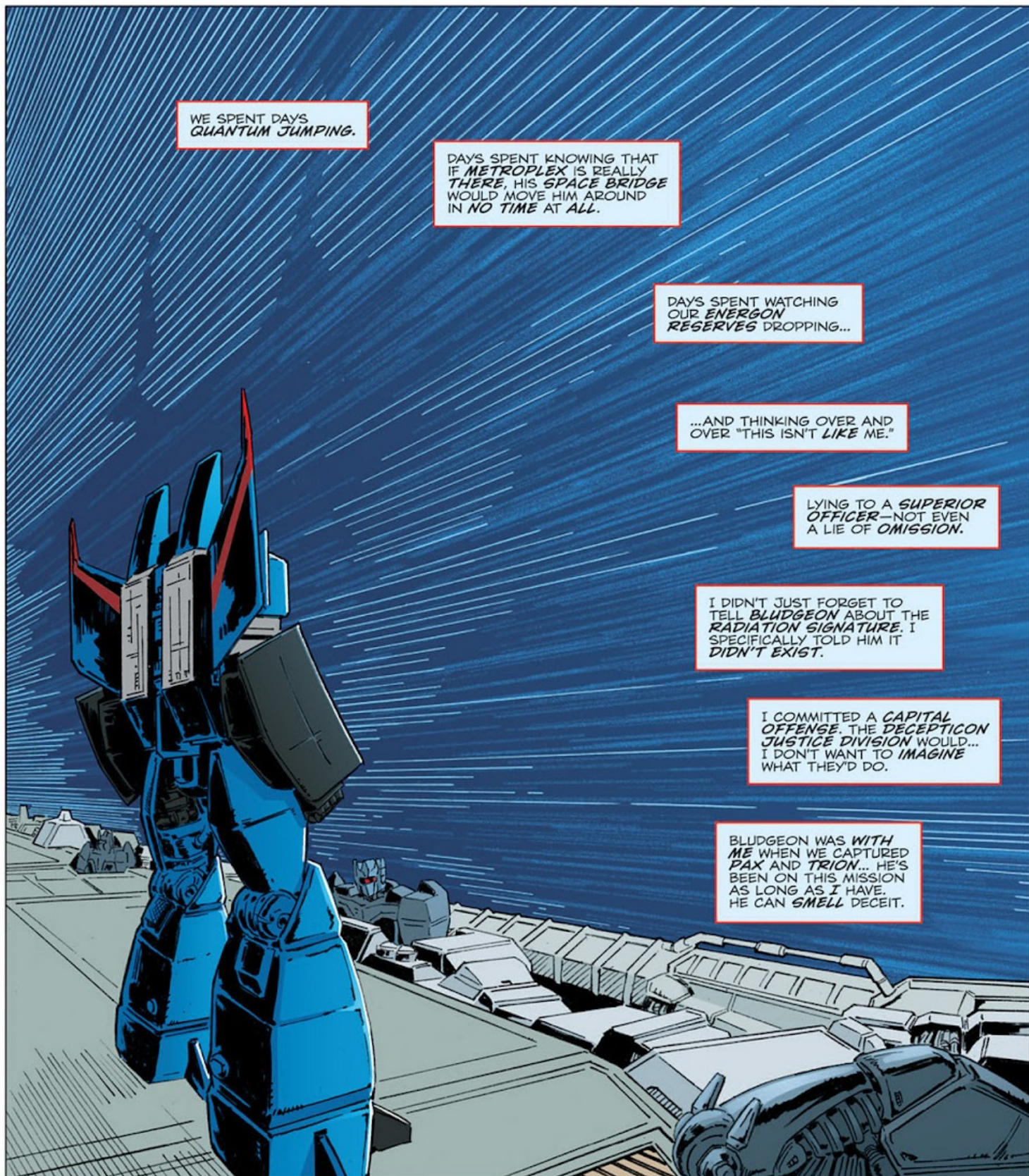


A
HUNCH.

I LIKE THAT.
NAVIGATOR—**SET**
COURSE TO
THUNDERCRACKER'S
HUNCH.

WHY DID I
LIE? WHY DID I
HOLD BACK
INFORMATION...?





WE SPENT DAYS
QUANTUM JUMPING.

DAYS SPENT KNOWING THAT
IF *METROPLEX* IS REALLY
THERE, HIS *SPACE BRIDGE*
WOULD MOVE HIM AROUND
IN *NO TIME AT ALL*.

DAYS SPENT WATCHING
OUR *ENERGON*
RESERVES DROPPING...

...AND THINKING OVER AND
OVER "THIS ISN'T *LIKE ME*."

LYING TO A *SUPERIOR*
OFFICER—NOT EVEN
A LIE OF *OMISSION*.

I DIDN'T JUST FORGET TO
TELL *BLUDGEON* ABOUT THE
RADIATION SIGNATURE. I
SPECIFICALLY TOLD HIM IT
DIDN'T EXIST.

I COMMITTED A *CAPITAL*
OFFENSE. THE *DECEPTICON*
JUSTICE DIVISION WOULD...
I DON'T WANT TO *IMAGINE*
WHAT THEY'D DO.

BLUDGEON WAS *WITH*
ME WHEN WE CAPTURED
PAX AND *TRION*... HE'S
BEEN ON THIS MISSION
AS LONG AS *I HAVE*.
HE CAN *SMELL* DECEIT.



ANYWAY... I'M A
DECEPTICON
SEEKER. THAT
IS MY *IDENTITY*.

WHAT DO I *HOPE*
TO ACCOMPLISH
BY ACTING LIKE
SOMETHING ELSE?

FINAL JUMP
SUCCESSFUL—



—WE'RE OUT OF FOLD-SPACE AND IN ORBIT.

I'M READING A RADIOACTIVE DECAY THAT CORRESPONDS WITH A MID-LEVEL PSEUDO-ENERGON...



...THIS PLANETOID CONTAINS AN UNDERGROUND RESERVOIR OF SOMETHING WE COULD CONSUME.

PROBABLY 20-25% AS EFFECTIVE AS ACTUAL ENERGON.



IF METROPLEX NEEDED TO POWER UP FOR HIS JOURNEY...

YEAH. AND THAT WOULD PROBABLY ATTRACT EXOTIC GASSES.

IF HE USED UP ANOTHER RESERVOIR OF PSEUDO-ENERGON ON THE LAST ASTEROID, THIS WOULD EXPLAIN ITS ATMOSPHERE.



I'M READING SOME BIOLOGICAL LIFE FORMS—

—IT LOOKS LIKE A PRIMITIVE CITY CONSTRUCTED DIRECTLY ON TOP OF THE PSEUDO-ENERGON RESERVOIR. PROBABLY SOME FREIGHTER GOT STRANDED ON THIS ROCK A COUPLE GENERATIONS AGO.



THEY MUST BE USING THE PSEUDO-ENERGON FOR GEOTHERMIC HEATING. WHAT'S THEIR TECHNOLOGY LEVEL?

INSIGNIFICANT.

PERFECT. THUNDERCRACKER—BLAST YOUR WAY THROUGH THEM AND TAKE METROPLEX BY SURPRISE IF, INDEED, IT RESIDES THERE.



BLUDGEON—SIR—

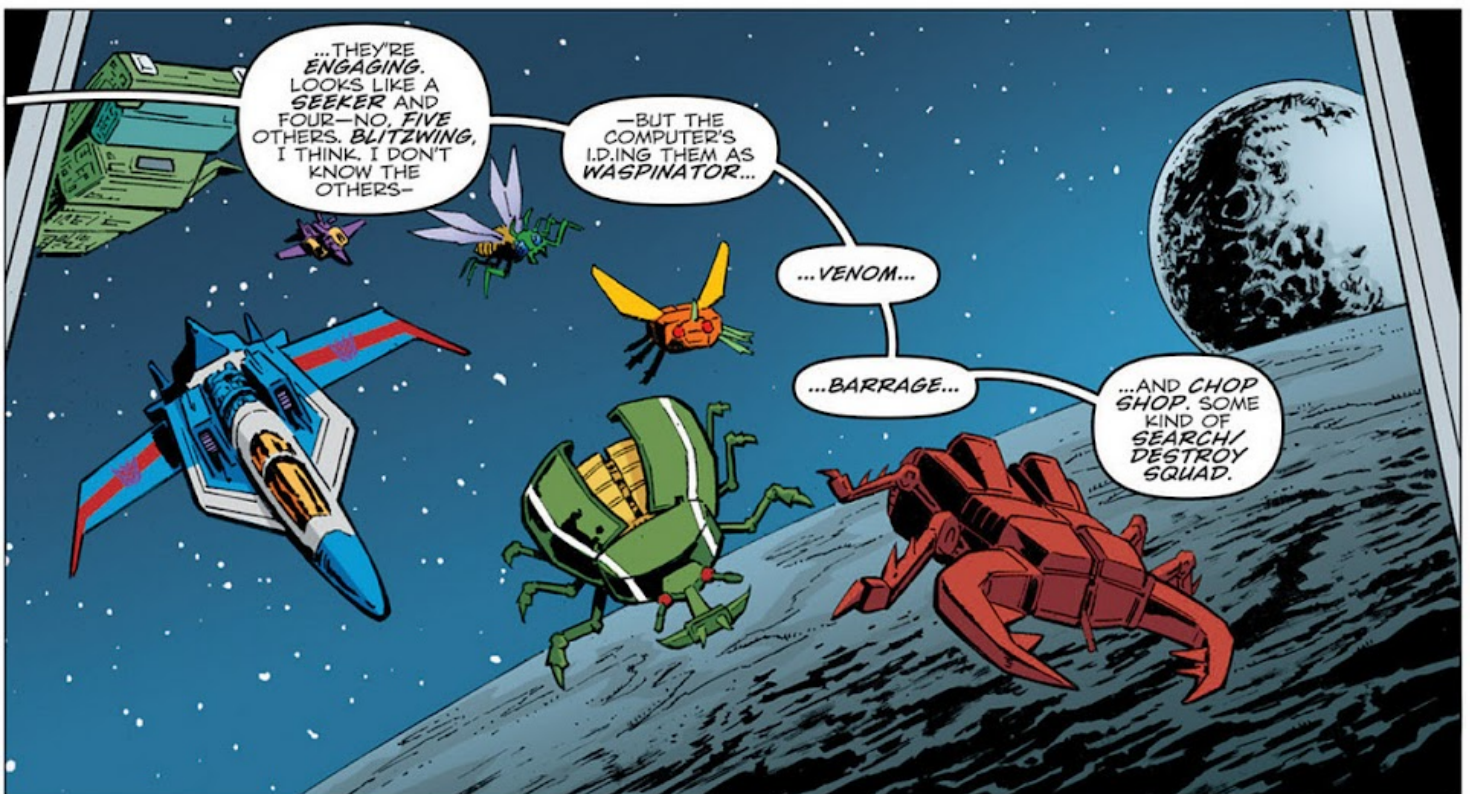
—WE COULD EASILY FIND AN ALTERNATE ROUTE!



BUT WHY WOULD WE BOTHER? THEY'RE IN THE WAY AND THEY OFFER NO THREAT.

GO THROUGH THEM. LEAVE NO SURVIVORS.

IT'S A MATTER OF POLICY—NO SURVIVORS TO GIVE INFORMATION TO OUR ENEMIES...





I DO THE ONLY THING I CAN—I MOVE IN *FIRST*, AND I MOVE IN *LOUD*.

I GIVE THEM A *WARNING*—GIVE THESE WORTHLESS CREATURES A *CHANCE* TO FIND *SHELTER*—TO AVOID MY COMPANIONS' *GUNS*.

[illegible][illegible]

NICE MOVE, THUNDERCRACKER—
LURING THESE *THINGS* OUT INTO THE OPEN!

YOU'RE MORE *SADISTIC* THAN I GAVE YOU CREDIT FOR!

A purple and orange Thundercracker jet is shown in profile, flying towards the right. It is firing a bright yellow energy blast from its front cannons. The background is a dark blue space with small white stars. Two speech bubbles are present: one on the left and one in the center. The first speech bubble contains the text "NICE MOVE, THUNDERCRACKER— LURING THESE *THINGS* OUT INTO THE OPEN!". The second speech bubble contains the text "YOU'RE MORE *SADISTIC* THAN I GAVE YOU CREDIT FOR!".

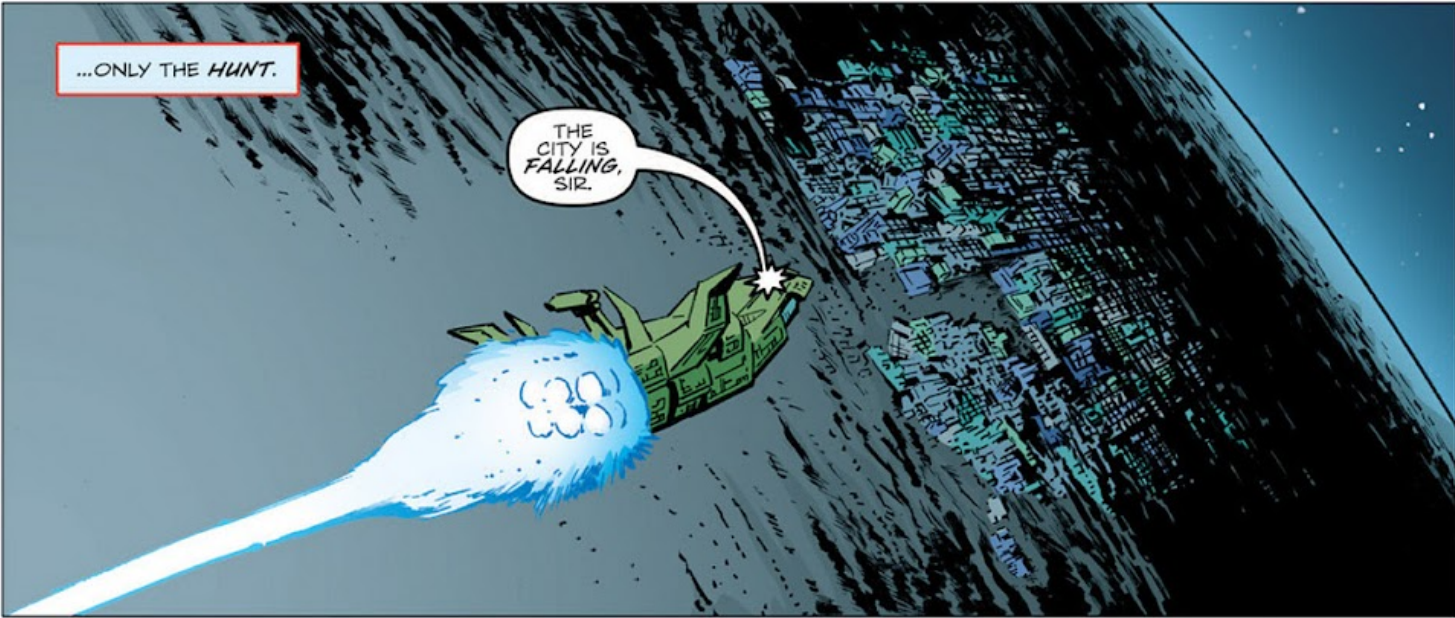
YOU'RE
A REAL
DECEPTICON
AFTER ALL!

LET BLITZWING AND
THE OTHERS DO
WHAT THEY WILL.

IT DOESN'T *MATTER*.

ONLY THE
MISSION...

ONLY THE
MISSION...



...ONLY THE HUNT.

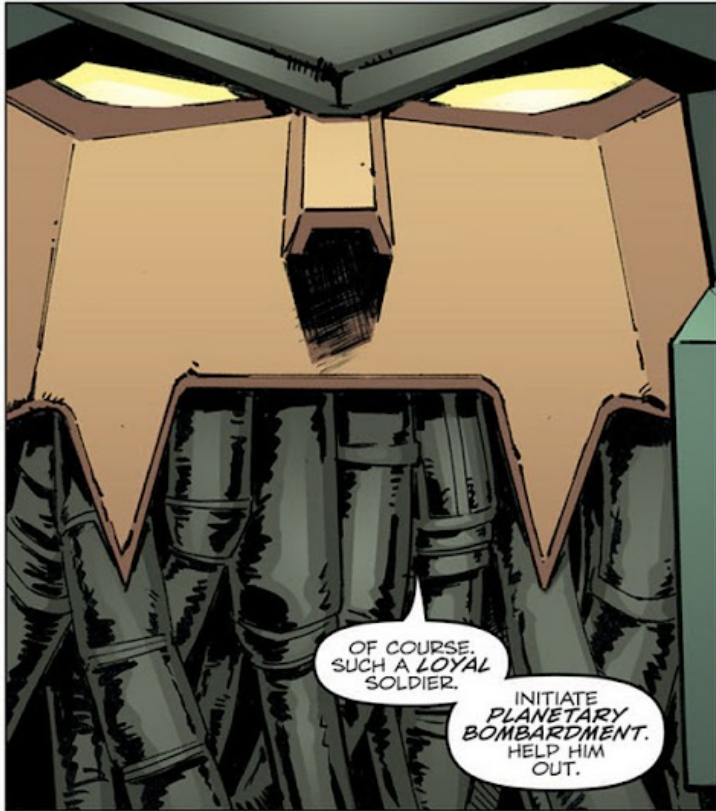
THE CITY IS FALLING, SIR.



THUNDERCRACKER SEEMS TO BE ON THE GROUND, THOUGH...

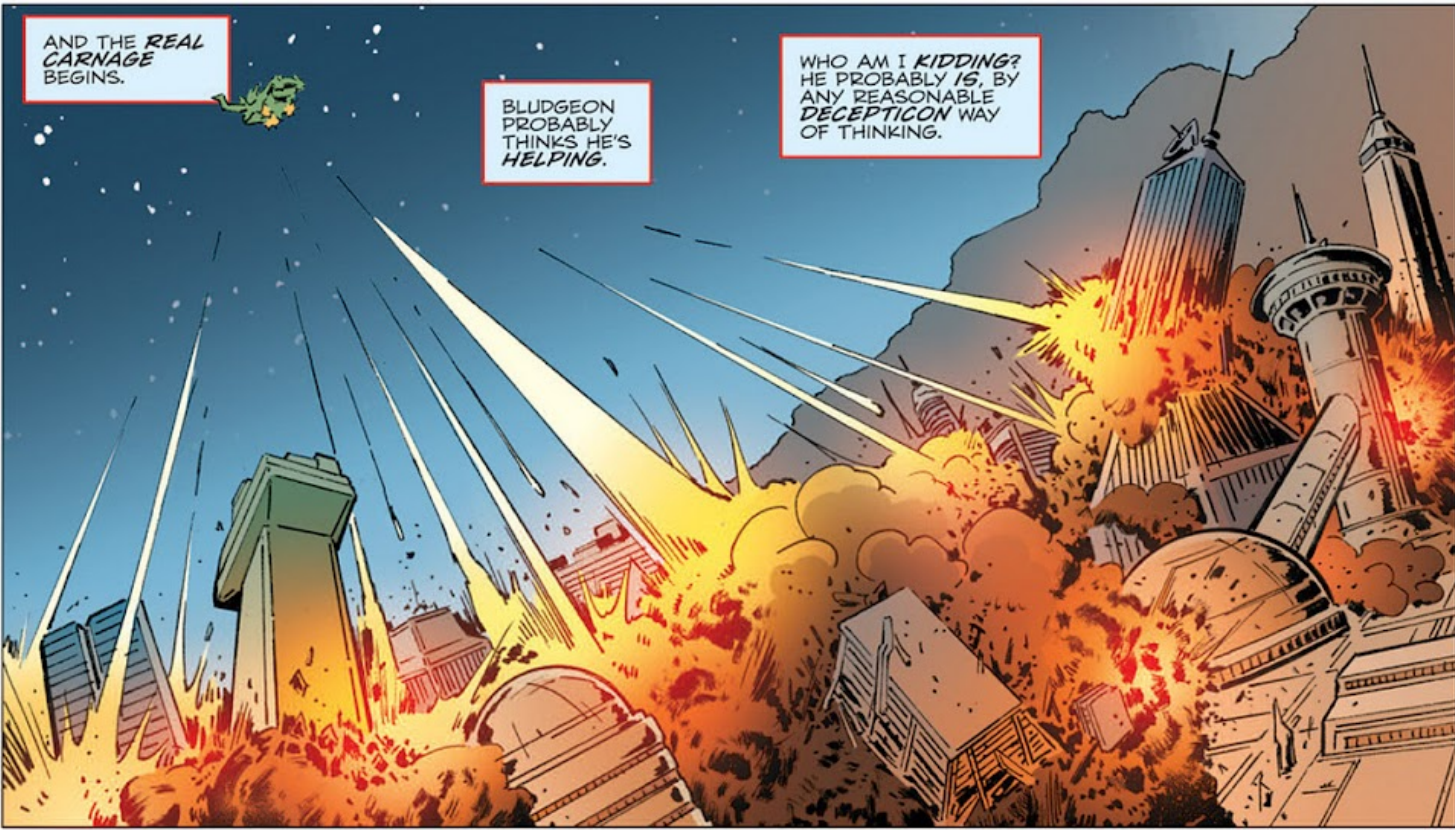
WHY IS HE NOT EXTERMINATING THE BIOLOGICAL INFESTATION WITH THE OTHERS?

UNLESS HE'S FOUND A WAY TO THE TITAN ALREADY.



OF COURSE. SUCH A LOYAL SOLDIER.

INITIATE PLANETARY BOMBARDMENT. HELP HIM OUT.



AND THE REAL CARNAGE BEGINS.

BLUDGEON PROBABLY THINKS HE'S HELPING.

WHO AM I KIDDING? HE PROBABLY IS, BY ANY REASONABLE DECEPTICON WAY OF THINKING.



HE WAS *RIGHT* ABOUT THE GEOTHERMAL ENERGY... THESE WRETCHED CREATURES MANAGED TO MAKE A RUDIMENTARY *ELECTRICAL GENERATOR* AND A *STEAM TUNNEL*...

...LEADING ME *RIGHT* WHERE I WANT TO GO.



YOU—
WASPINATOR!

FOLLOW ME *IN*—
I'LL NEED *BACKUP*.

PRIMUS KNOWS WHAT I'M SUPPOSED TO DO IF I ACTUALLY *FIND* METROPLEX. HOPEFULLY HE WON'T *NOTICE* ME...



...I'LL BE ABLE TO GET THE DATA BEFORE—

WASPINATOR!



THIS WASN'T ANYTHING I WAS EXPECTING...

JETFIRE—
COVER THE SKY!

ROGER!

NIGHTBEAT—
GET THE CREATURES TO *SAFETY!*

HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO DO *THAT?*

FIGURE SOMETHING OUT!



THE
SHIP—
UNK!

TAKE THESE
GUYS OUT
FAST—AND WE
MIGHT HAVE A
CHANCE!



COMMANDER
BLUDGEON! THE
IMPACT IS TEARING
US APART! WE'RE
GOING DOWN!

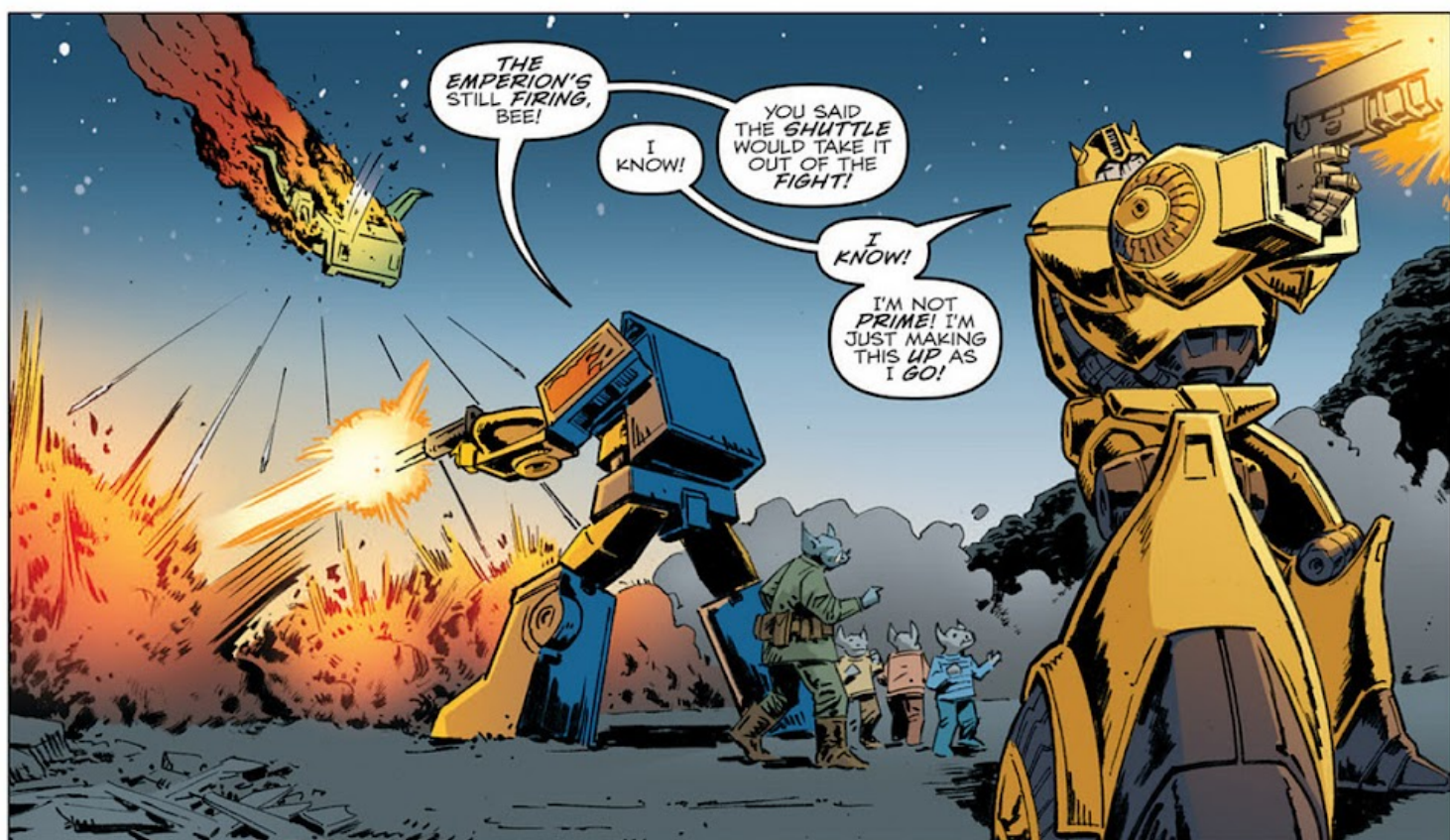
FLIERS,
WITH ME.



ALL
OTHERS
REMAIN
AT YOUR
POSTS.



THE
DECEPTICON
EMPIRE SHALL
REMEMBER
YOU.



THE
EMPERION'S
STILL FIRING,
BEE!

I
KNOW!

YOU SAID
THE SHUTTLE
WOULD TAKE IT
OUT OF THE
FIGHT!

I
KNOW!

I'M NOT
PRIME! I'M
JUST MAKING
THIS UP AS
I GO!



NOW
YOU TELL
ME!

BEE—I
THINK ONE OF
THEM *DUCKED*
DOWN SOME
SORT OF A
TUNNEL!



GOT
IT—DO
WHAT YOU
CAN UP
HERE.



EVERYTHING'S
FALLING
APART.



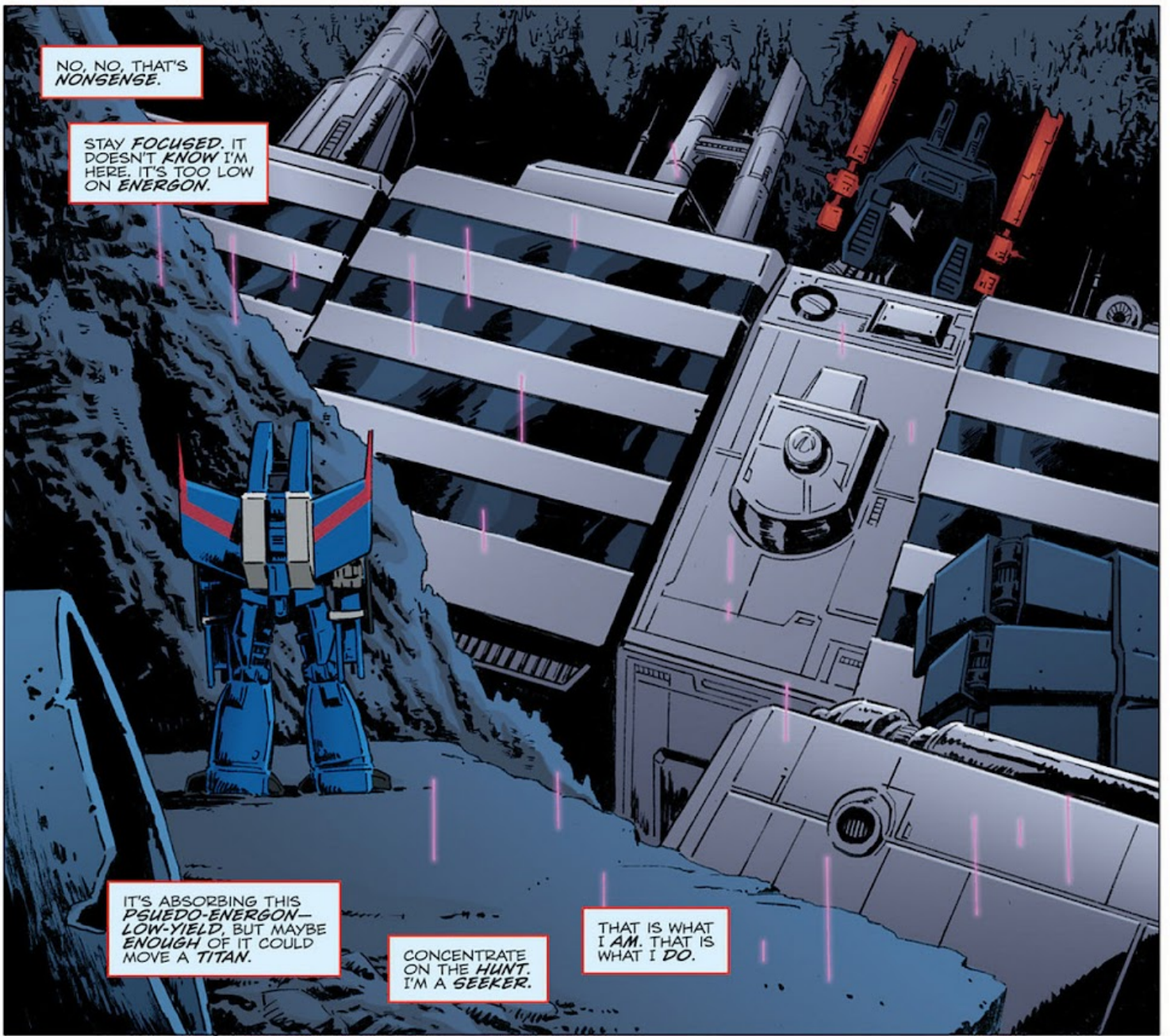
OKAY,
DECEPTICONS.

LET'S...
SEE HOW
THIS GOES.

THAT
WASN'T A VERY
INSPIRING LINE,
NIGHTBEAT.

IT'S
BEEN A
LONG
DAY.

IT STARTED
WITH MY LIE. I
CAUSED THIS.



NO, NO, THAT'S
NONSENSE.

STAY *FOCUSED*. IT
DOESN'T *KNOW* I'M
HERE. IT'S TOO LOW
ON *ENERGON*.

IT'S ABSORBING THIS
PSUEDO-ENERGON—
LOW-YIELD, BUT MAYBE
ENOUGH OF IT COULD
MOVE A *TITAN*.

CONCENTRATE
ON THE *HUNT*.
I'M A *SEEKER*.

THAT IS WHAT
I *AM*. THAT IS
WHAT I *DO*.



FREEZE,
THUNDERCRACKER!
WHAT DO YOU
THINK YOU'RE—

—OH, BOY...
METROPLEX—?

NO...



...THE
TITAN IS
MINE!

CRAKKA
CRAKKA
CRAKKA



ERG.
WHY CAN'T
ANYTHING
BE EASY?



